

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (Currently amended) An electric power steering device for transmitting rotation of a steering assisting electric motor to a steering mechanism through a small gear and a large gear, comprising:

a first member ~~disposed~~ on a rotary shaft of said electric motor;

a second member ~~disposed~~ at one end of the small gear; and

an elastic member ~~interposed~~ between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which ~~a~~ the torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger ~~not less~~ than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 2. (Currently amended) The electric power steering device according to Claim 1,

wherein said first and second members comprise ~~have~~ protrusions for meshing in a torque transmittable manner while clamping the elastic member in ~~a~~ the rotational direction of the rotary shaft,

wherein the corresponding protrusions of the first and second members comprise ~~have~~ clamping faces acting as torque transmission faces capable of clamping the elastic member in-between, and

wherein at least one of either said clamping faces and a the clamped face faces as the torque transmission faces of the elastic member confronting the clamping faces ~~former~~ comprise ~~are provided with~~ projections for establishing the first elastic modulus by compressing the elastic member locally when said torsion angle is less than the predetermined angle.

Claim 3. (Currently amended) The electric power steering device according to Claim 1,

wherein said first and second members comprise ~~have~~ a plurality of projections for meshing in a torque transmittable manner while clamping the elastic member in a the rotating direction of the rotary shaft,

wherein said elastic member comprises a bifurcated structure defining ~~has~~ a cavity portion, and

wherein the elastic member is compressed to collapse ~~bury~~ the cavity portion substantially when said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger ~~not less~~ than the predetermined angle.

Claim 4. (Currently amended) A joint for use in an the electric power steering device ~~according to Claim 1~~, comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member ~~interposed~~ between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which ~~a~~ the torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger ~~not less~~ than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 5. (Currently amended) A joint for use in an ~~the~~ electric power steering device for transmitting rotation of a steering assisting electric motor to a steering mechanism through a small gear and a large gear, said joint comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member ~~interposed~~ between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which ~~a~~ the torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger ~~not less~~ than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 6. (Currently amended) A joint for use in an ~~the~~ electric power steering device ~~according to Claim 2~~, comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member ~~interposed~~ between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which ~~a the~~ torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger ~~not less~~ than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 7. (Currently amended) A joint for use in ~~an the~~ electric power steering device according to ~~Claim 3~~, comprising:

a first member;

a second member; and

an elastic member ~~interposed~~ between the first and second members for transmitting a torque between the two members;

wherein said elastic member has a first elastic modulus corresponding to a case, in which ~~a the~~ torsion angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus corresponding to another case, in which said torsion angle is one of equal to and larger ~~not less~~ than the predetermined angle, and wherein said first elastic modulus is smaller than said second elastic modulus.

Claim 8. (New) An electric power steering device comprising:

a first member;
a second member; and
an elastic member between the first member and the second member and having at least a two-stage torsional elastic modulus.

Claim 9. (New) The device of claim 8, wherein said at least two-stage torsional elastic modulus has a first elastic modulus when the angle between the first and second members is less than a predetermined angle and a second elastic modulus that is larger than the first elastic modulus when the angle between the first and second members is one of equal to and larger than the predetermined angle.

Claim 10. (New) The device of claim 9, wherein said elastic member comprises a foam portion having said first elastic modulus.

Claim 11. (New) The device of claim 9, wherein said elastic member comprises a first layer having said first elastic modulus and a second layer having said second elastic modulus.

Claim 12. (New) The device of claim 11, wherein said first and second layers extend radially outward from a body portion of said elastic member.

Claim 13. (New) The device of claim 11, wherein said first layer comprises two first layers that sandwich said second layer.

Claim 14. (New) The device of claim 8, wherein each of said first member and said second member comprises a protrusion.

Claim 15. (New) The device of claim 8, wherein said elastic member comprises:
a body portion; and
a plurality of plate-shaped clamped portions radially extending from said body portion.

Claim 16. (New) The device of claim 15, wherein said elastic member further comprises a projection circumferentially extending from at least one of said plurality of plate-shaped clamped portions.